

Stray Feathers.

THE BEE-EATER (*Merops ornatus*).—In last issue of *Emu* the writer of "Mallee Notes" says the last of these birds in migrating left about 27th February. They are here all the year round. Just now is midwinter, with cold mornings, almost frost. They come at sunrise to the fence a few yards from my bee-hives, sit there, and as the bees essay to take flight, catch them on the wing, slap them on the rail, and swallow them whole.—WILL M'ILWRAITH. Rockhampton, 1/7/07.

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CUCKOOS AND CROWS.—The two young Channelbills (*Scythrops*) and the young Crow left the nest together. The two former are still following the Crows, a flock of them, and I expect the young Crow is among them also, but, of course, I cannot recognise it. I said the *Scythrops* are following the Crows, but I think it is the other way about; the Crows do not seem to be able to take their eyes off the young "Storm-Birds," and follow them very closely. They are still being fed by their foster-parents, but whether more than one pair feed them I am unable to say.—F. L. BERNEY. Richmond, N.Q.

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RUFIOUS BRISTLE-BIRD.—Few members of the A.O.U. have opportunities equal to those of Mr. George Graham, of Scott's Creek, Vic., for observing the Rufous Bristle-Bird (*Sphenura broadbenti*). Like others who have come in contact with it, Mr. Graham has remarked the striking resemblance in its habits it bears to the Coachwhip-Bird (*Psophodes crepitans*). The male Bristle-Bird makes the first long call-note, and then is answered immediately by the female, usually some distance away. Although not furnished with a crest, its habit of erecting the crown feathers when startled gives it, to one who gets but a momentary glimpse of it, the appearance of a crested bird.—W. J. STEPHEN. Hawthorn, 16/5/07.

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BLACK SWANS NESTING.—On 8th July, 1907, I observed three Swans' (*Chenopsis atrata*) nests on Monivae Swamp, about four miles from Hamilton. One contained five eggs, which were evidently addled; the other nests contained fresh eggs. This is the earliest date on which I have found Swans' eggs in this locality. Late in October, about three years ago, I found several nests with fresh eggs in a small swamp at the back of Mount Sturgeon, one being about 10 yards from a lane through which vehicles and horsemen not infrequently passed. It had been an unusually wet spring, the swamps had been badly flooded in September, and no doubt many of the nests built earlier had

been washed away. The same year I found a Native Companion's nest near the Wannon on 12th December, which is the latest I have ever known for that bird here.—G. P. TAIT. Hamilton, 30/7/07.

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PHOTOGRAPHING HERONS' NESTS.—Photographing in the tree-tops is not an easy task. If a person acquainted with photography remembers how difficult it is to focus and photograph animal nature on *terra firma*, he can readily understand how awkward and how handicapped he would be were he *minus* an arm and a leg when engaged in this operation. But to be so handicapped on mother earth is simply play to photography in mid-air in the giddy heights of a tree-top—“*flora infirma*.” Besides being *minus* an arm and both legs, which are necessarily occupied to their utmost capacity maintaining the equilibrium in the tree, one has to contend with the swaying of the limb also. In this unstable posture there is but one hand available to adjust the camera and affix it to the bough, and the adjustment of the focus is rendered all the more awkward since the climber is trembling and almost breathless with his exertions—that is, provided he has climbed some distance—and is also very often half-blinded with either perspiration or fibrous dust dislodged from the bark of the tree.—A. H. E. MATTINGLEY.

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USEFUL BIRDS.—Mr. Geo. Graham, of Scott's Creek, near Cobden, Victoria, furnishes a note in illustration of the value of our insectivorous birds. During the autumn in his district, there was a plague of black crickets, which did serious damage, but their ravages were largely checked by the efforts of their bird enemies, among which were Wood-Swallows (*Artamus sordidus*) in hundreds, White-fronted Herons (*Notophoxyx novae-hollandiæ*), White-fronted Chats (*Ephthianura albifrons*), Pipits (*Anthus australis*), Kestrels (*Cerchneis cenchroides*), Laughing Jackasses (*Dacelo gigas*), White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina leuconota*), Spur-winged Plover (*Lobivanellus lobatus*), and Stubble Quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*). It is perhaps not generally known that the Stubble Quail can vary its usual diet of seeds, but the crops of several which were examined were found to contain plump crickets. As bearing on the great question of migration, Mr. Graham remarks that the Wood-Swallow above mentioned is in his district very regular in its time of departure—about the first of May—and, although in May of this year the season was like summer, and the crickets were at the egg-bearing stage, when they would form tempting morsels for insectivorous birds, yet the Wood-Swallows did not prolong their sojourn in the slightest degree.—W. J. STEPHEN. Hawthorn, 6/9/07.

HALCYON SANCTUS AND ALCYONE AZUREA.—I notice that Mr. J. W. Mellor states that the Blue Kingfisher is the only species of Kingfisher found in Tasmania. In this he is not quite correct, as we have *Halcyon sanctus* with us during the summer months, though neither of them are what you would class as common birds. On referring to Campbell's "Nest and Eggs," I notice that he gives Tasmania in his distribution of *H. sanctus*. I have observed *Alcyone azurea* on several rivers and creeks about Hobart, but not for the last three or four years; but this may be because I have not been afield so much. *H. sanctus* I have noted several times during the last two years near the Derwent in the summer months, once as early as the 4th August, (1905). When I was riding my bicycle from my house, situate some three miles out of town, to my office, I saw *H. sanctus* sitting on a boat-house, and as it was so early in the season I stopped to observe him for some time. He flew down to some stones which were surrounded by about a foot of water, which at this place is quite salt. I was much interested in his movements, as I always understood that they did not fish like *A. azurea*, and you can imagine my astonishment, when, after looking intently in the water for some moments, he plunged boldly in and emerged with a small fish about two inches long in his bill, which he proceeded to grasp by the tail, gave it a sharp whack on the stone on which he was sitting, and then swallowed it; he sat there all bunched up for two or three minutes, and then suddenly drew himself up, dived in again, and another fish was added to his morning's meal. How long this would have continued I know not, but, unfortunately, a Silver Gull came along, and off flew my little friend further up the shore, and I saw him no more that morning. Next morning I again saw him, but this time he was feeding amongst some seaweed, too far off for me to note what he was eating. I do not know if any of our members have had similar experiences or not, but Gould in his "Handbook" states that he "has never seen it plunge into the water after its prey like the true Kingfisher, and that he does not believe that it does," but relates that it kills insects, &c., by beating them on rocks in just the same manner as I have described this one did to kill the fish.—A. L. BUTLER. Hobart, 10/7/07.

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BUTCHER-BIRDS FIGHT.—

"Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine ———"

An illustration of this line from "In Memoriam" was presented to us a few days ago while returning from a day's tramp among the hills and gullies bordering the South Esk River. Mr. Thompson and myself were proceeding late in the afternoon along the ridge of a timbered slope when the loud cries of a

bird, apparently in distress, struck upon our ears. We at first took the voice to be that of a Noisy Miner (*Myzantha garrula*), and scanned the horizontal branch of a gum-tree not far above our heads to try and discover the cause of the outcry. After a few seconds the sounds appeared to come from a clump of bracken near the foot of the eucalypt; Thompson proceeded thither, and, after glancing into the thicket, called to me. On joining him I was amazed to see two Butcher-Birds (*Cracticus cinereus*) engaged in deadly strife—one stretched upon his back on the ground, the beak partly open, uttering shrill cries of distress; the assailant lying upon him, having driven the hooked point of the long, cruel beak in so far just behind the base of the other's mandible that he was quite unable to withdraw it, and thus himself remained a prisoner. The assailant's left foot was clasping the prominent wing joint on the lower bird's right, and his right foot was forced against the other's left cheek, behind the point where the beak was indriven. Thus interlocked, they were absolutely powerless to move, and no doubt would have perished miserably had we not fortunately dropped upon them in the nick of time. My friend raised them in his hands, they being unable to offer any resistance, and while thus held I took a short stick, and, after several attempts, succeeded in pushing back the assassin's beak until the hooked point was clear of the bone in the other's head, thus enabling it to be withdrawn. The stick was also requisitioned to unclasp the left foot, which clutched the wing, the claws having become so fixed in their intense grip that they could not voluntarily let go. After we succeeded in separating them from their deadly clasp, they immediately showed their gratitude by biting fiercely at Thompson's fingers, so indomitable was their spirit! The first one released flew away towards the creek, probably to slake the burning thirst engendered by his fierce exertions; the other was carried some distance from the field of battle, and then allowed to escape among the bushes. Both were in splendid plumage, and evidently in the pink of fighting condition. What was the cause of the conflict? Scarcely a lady *Cracticus*, seeing that the season is late autumn. Perhaps some tit-bit which they espied simultaneously; or may it not have been just the "certaminis gaudium," that fierce "joy of battle," which obtains so strongly in the breasts of these minor birds of prey.—H. STUART DOVE. Launceston, Tas., 24/5/07.

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AN ABNORMAL SEASON.—In this district (Talbragar River) there is something unusual about the habits of birds this winter. A great many varieties have been nesting during the last six weeks. Although such a bird as the Whistling Eagle (*Haliastur sphenurus*) has been known to breed in every month of the year,

this is the first year I have noticed them nesting here during the winter. On 29th May I observed a nest with two young birds almost ready to leave their home. During July I noticed four pairs of birds breeding, and up till the present date (9th August) four nests this month. I have noticed the following birds nesting during the last six weeks:—Ravens (*Corone australis*), Whiteface (*Xerophila leucopsis*), Miners (*Myzantha garrula*), Brown Tree-creepers (*Climacteris scandens*), Red-tipped Pardalotes (*Pardalotus ornatus*), Red-backed Parrakeet (*Psephotus hæmatonotus*), Spur-winged Plovers (*Lobivanellus lobatus*), and the Black-breasted Plovers (*Zonifer tricolor*). In the last issue of *The Emu* (vol. vii., p. 30), I made the remark that the Warty-faced Honey-eaters (*Meliphaga phrygia*) appeared to be going to winter with us; this they have done, also the Cockatoo-Parrakeets (*Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ*) and the Red Wattle-Birds (*Acanthochæra carunculata*). With regard to the latter, I am not sure that this is the first year that I have known of any to remain the winter, but never before have I seen them in such large numbers; they are not only to be seen by the river, but throughout the district. I notice in Mr. A. J. Campbell's "Nests and Eggs" he remarks that in the years 1853-1860 Wattle-Birds were very plentiful at Frenchman's, Amphitheatre, Warrnambool, and other places in the Western District of Victoria, where 70 birds might be easily shot in a morning. In certain localities within a few miles of here just now I am sure it would be no very difficult matter to shoot 170 in a morning. I had occasion to drive to Dubbo and back this week, and the whole way along the road these birds were to be seen in great numbers; even in Dubbo an odd bird was to be seen. Upon my return journey I stopped in a thick pine scrub about 17 miles from here for lunch. At this spot the birds appeared to be exceptionally numerous. I walked about a mile into the scrub to see if any of the birds were yet breeding, and although I saw no nests, I noticed most of the birds were in pairs. A great many varieties of birds have wintered with us this year in much larger numbers than I have ever known before. Why this should be I cannot understand. Perhaps it is on account of the severe drought in other parts of the State. This month I have also seen young White-winged Choughs (*Corcorax melanorhamphus*) and Babbler (*Pomatorhinus temporalis*) which had already left the nests.—THOS. P. AUSTIN. Cobbora (N.S.W.), 9/8/07.

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ANNOTATIONS.—*Mesophoyx plumifera* (Plumed Egret).—Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley's articles ("Heronries" and "Plundered for Their Plumes") in this issue will be read with interest and shame—interest, because bringing to our knowledge the breeding place of a rare bird, with eggs hitherto undescribed;

and shame, because of the ruthless destruction of breeding birds by vandals. The Plumed Egret was found breeding in company with its larger cousin, *Herodias timoriensis*, in the tall red gums (eucalypts) standing in the backwaters of the River Murray. *Eggs*.—Clutch, three or four; broad ellipse in shape; texture of shell somewhat coarse; surface slightly glossy, with here and there tiny nodules, and in some examples creases; colour, bluish-green, more or less besmeared with bird-lime. Dimensions in inches of two clutches:—A—(1) 1.86 x 1.37; (2) 1.86 x 1.4; (3) 1.9 x 1.38. B—(1) 1.86 x 1.39; (2) 1.87 x 1.42; (3) 1.94 x 1.4; (4) 1.95 x 1.4. Mr. Mattingley exhibited these eggs at the August meeting of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria. (See *Vict. Nat.*, xxiv., p. 84.) For description of the nests see his article (in this issue), p. 69.

Ptilotis sonora (Singing Honey-eater).—This fine species enjoys a wide range, and is evidently a hardy bird. My son, Mr. A. G. Campbell, brought home a clutch of three fledglings from the Anglesea coastal district (south-west of Port Phillip), where he described these Honey-eaters as very plentiful, welcoming in all directions the break of day with their merry calls. The youngsters were readily reared on sifted "Lark-food," moistened with honey-water, and flies. They became great pets in the aviary, and when anyone entered they would perch on the shoulder or bare head, and readily take flies from the palm of the hand. They did not sing in the way that their name would suggest, but uttered lively calls, and occasionally mimicked the alarm note of their cousin, *P. penicillata*, which occupied the same aviary. When the cold weather arrived only one Singing Honey-eater remained. It was transferred to Miss Bowie's aviary, where, with other Honey-eaters, it received regular attention. I think this is the first occasion that this bird has been kept in captivity. It makes a most charming pet, and assumes almost adult plumage from the nest.

Hylacola pyrrhopygia (Chestnut-rumped Ground-Wren).—This rare bird was recently found in the Dandenongs, near Melbourne. Mr. W. E. Molesworth forwards another specimen, which he procured at Lethbridge last May. He states:—"I have flushed this bird in a piece of country a few acres in extent, in the centre of a stringy-bark forest, where grass-trees (*Xanthorrhoea*) are growing quite alone on sandy soil. The birds are hard to flush, but can be traced by their singing or calling to each other."—A. J. CAMPBELL.

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ACANTHORNIS MAGNA.—On page 210, vol. vi., of *The Emu* the following question is asked—"Did Union members—as to *Acanthornis magna*—kill the last of the tribe, or was it the

first?" I think I can answer both queries. They certainly did not kill the first, nor yet the second, as I believe that I can claim the doubtful honour, at any rate as far as being one of the first two recorded specimens—*vide* a paper read before the Victorian Field Naturalists' Club, 12th November, 1883, by Mr. A. J. Campbell, and also published by him in "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," and later on again included in his completed work and published in 1900. So much for the first. As to the "last of the tribe," that has not been killed yet, and I hope will not be for many years to come, as will be seen from the following notes:—In the early part of last December I was staying for a week at Glenora, and on several occasions I saw *Acanthornis magna*—one pair feeding three young ones who had left the nest within a day or so, both male and female being busily employed bringing grubs and small beetles to help to fill up those three little yellow caverns which seemed to lead to unknown depths, as I counted 83 trips for both parents in 20 minutes, and, like Oliver Twist, they still "asked for more." It was most interesting to watch these proceedings. There were the three little hungry creatures sitting huddled close together on a bough of native musk, and as soon as they heard papa or mamma calling in the distance each would give a little "cheep" as though to guide them to where their hungry children were; when they came near there was such a bustling and pushing amongst the three to get the coveted morsel, such fluttering of wings and wild cries, then a gulp, a sort of satisfied gurgle, and then silence. This performance was repeated every time either of the parents brought anything edible. Only once did I see the larger of the three snatch the tempting morsel from his brother's or sister's mouth; the number of times each nestling was fed being 28, 26, 29, and yet the father and mother were not present together and did not see which young one had been fed last. Sometimes they would both feed the same one, but more often would feed the one on either side and then the middle one. Several times the mother remained with the young while the male bird was away hunting, and it was a very pretty sight to see how she attended the little ones, preening their feathers and pulling off little bits of fluff, and generally making them look smart against their father's return. In conclusion, I may state that *Acanthornis magna* is not a rare bird, in my opinion, if one knows its habits and where to look for it; but, being a scrub bird, it naturally retreats farther away as the land is cleared, especially the creeks and gullies, which are its natural haunts. In a former paper read by me before the Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club, and published in *The Emu*, vol. i., page 157, I gave a list of places where I had noted *Acanthornis magna* which covered a wide area of the south of Tasmania.—A. L. BUTLER. Hobart, 10/7/07.

THE LYRE-BIRD.—On the 14th May, 1907, I was visiting Cowra Creek, in the Macannally Ranges, in New South Wales. The ranges are very steep and well wooded with somewhat stunted stringy-barks (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and other eucalypts. There is very little undergrowth. The only dwarf bushes that attracted my notice were a species of *pultenæa* closely allied to our *Pultenæa daphnoides* and a *bursaria* allied to *B. spinosa*. Most of the gullies were exceptionally bare of undergrowth, although there were fairly thick patches of wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) on the moister bottoms. Fern was mostly conspicuous by its absence. It will thus be seen that there are evidences that the climate formerly resembled somewhat that of the Mt. Lofty Ranges, the altitude being probably about 4,000 feet. But at the present time, and, I am informed, for the last ten years, the district has been exceedingly dry, and I should doubt from appearances whether the rainfall has equalled that of the "foot-hills" near Adelaide.

In spite of these unlikely conditions the Lyre-Bird (*Menura superba*) is very numerous. I saw evidences of their recent scratching in all the gullies and hill slopes visited, and on the edge of the creek bank I inspected one of their "seats" or playgrounds, evidently used by the bird on the previous evening. I was informed that in this district the birds never nest on the ground, but always in hollow tree trunks or trees, often at a considerable height—20 feet, 30 feet, and, I was told, 40 feet high. The open nature of the country and the lack of cover will probably account for this habit. From what I could learn this has been the persistent practice of the Lyre-Bird in this district for many years prior to the advent of foxes. One nest I examined was built in the standing stump of a fallen burnt tree. The bottom of the nest on the upper side was 5 feet 6 inches from the ground and a foot more on the lower side. The V-shaped hollow below the nest proper had been filled in by the birds with clay or mud, then a layer of sticks and again more clay, another layer of sticks and clay. On this solid foundation the nest proper was built, formed of sticks, twigs, bark, &c. Two nests were built close to where the miners were working and in full sight of their workings, the birds appearing quite heedless of the noise caused by the operations of mining. At other times the birds are exceedingly difficult to approach, except when engaged in "song" or mocking.

Amongst the varied sounds of the bush these birds imitate in these ranges was that of "knapping" (chipping off bits of stone) by prospectors. My informants, Mr. Murray and his son, came upon a bird making this sound when they were expecting to find a miner. It is quite evident from observations that this bird can be acclimatised without any difficulty in the Mt. Lofty

Ranges (South Australia), and there is not the slightest doubt that the conditions that prevail in the neighbourhood of Western River or Snug Cove in Kangaroo Island will meet all their requirements. No time should be lost in introducing this wonderful bird into these places. (Read before the S.A. Ornithological Association, 6/6/07.)—EDWIN ASHBY. Blackwood (S.A.)

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ROSELLA AND CRIMSON PARRAKEETS.—The Rosella (*Platycercus eximius*), though a bird of exquisite beauty, candidly speaking is a thorough scamp, only excelled in sheer impudence by that orchard pest the Musk-Lorikeet (*Glossopsittacus concinnus*). This "cheeky" species has a large head, seemingly a brain-weight equal to that of a Rosella. Notwithstanding, the Lorikeet has either no sense of danger or will not be educated into it. If a person takes his stand under a richly-blossomed eucalpyt, numbers of shots may be fired at them. Not so with Rosellas. They will cut at the first pop, unless a winged bird is made to scream, when his mates flock in to investigate. We will now put Rosellas on trial for damaging crops. In the vicinage of Woodend North (Shire of Newham), a white gum country, with a good amount of dead timber and green, these Parrots are numerous. On the block specified there are several dams, and the land is tilled, hence conditions favour the presence of this bird. It was noted that on certain flats considerable damage was done to grain from the time it became eatable until placed in stack. Alighting on the tops of the sheaves, besides taking their fill, they shelled much, which fell upon the ground. To me this waste appeared considerable, but taken for the whole field the loss would not be serious, because if it had people would have tried to cope with the pest. That farmers made no attempt to destroy them is proof that they were not considered a serious nuisance. Since taking up my quarters here (two miles from Drouin) Rosellas have been carefully observed in my sister's garden—a plantation of upwards of 100 fruit trees of various descriptions. When the fruit season arrives, Rosellas in small parties make frequent raids, with fatal consequences to themselves, because one or two are shot. Concerning these marauders my opinion is if not molested others would chum in with them—an increase of invaders means an extension of havoc amongst the fruit. About Drouin there are some extensive orchards. So far, no complaints have reached me to the effect that this bird is a fruit pirate. Since the commencement of this month (June) at this place they have started nipping off the ends of the future fruit-spikes of pear trees. Whether this is done to sharpen their

bills or to eat the tender buds I am not sure, because the moment they are noticed the gun is brought out. Last year on two occasions a few short rows of garden peas were planted. Not being closely watched, as the sprouts appeared "pretty Joeys" hooked up every one. More could be said concerning this lovely creature, but it has been dwelt on long enough, so by way of an appropriate ending, the plough with the axe has enlarged its empire to such an extent that extinction is an impossibility.

Crimson Parrakeet (*Platycercus elegans*).—As far back as can be remembered this bird was called the "Lory." I can remember it on the Plenty River, where my father was overseer to Mr. E. T. Flintoff on what is now Oldstead, near Greensborough. It was about the year 1843 that I saw Mr. Batey throw a stick at a flock of these Parrots, either on a newly-sown paddock or alongside of cornstacks. It is highly probable that they are not to be found there now. *P. elegans* is one of those birds that has been pushed back by settlement—not a matter to be wondered at, because, as far as my observation has gone, it displays a partiality for thickly timbered tracts. In passing through a large extent of the Black Forest, near Mt. Macedon (though all useful timber is cut down, in parts it is dense enough to this day, owing to the fact of natural replacement), where real forest gloom prevails, if a Parrot is to be seen it is bound to be *P. elegans*. Herein it differs from the Rosella, a creature that may be termed a bird of sunshine, seeing that it has a leaning towards open forest country. By the way, one year, near Lancefield, season now forgotten, some Crimson Parrakeets were feeding in eucalypts, which to the best of my recollection were not in flower. One or two birds were knocked over, and when cooked were unpleasant eating—rather a surprise to me, because at other times I had found them as good as Rosellas.

Hybrid (? Gould's *Platycercus ignitus*).—My first knowledge of this Parrot was derived from Mr. James Notman, of Mt. William, near Lancefield, in 1882. He described it as a cross between a Rosella and a Crimson Parrakeet as far as colour was concerned. From where his old homestead stands a wide valley is crossed, then a low ridge, and after that a blind creek. In this we are going to Kilmore. Mr. Notman, in speaking of those Parrots, said—"I have never seen them on this side of the creek," meaning, of course, Mt. William side. I subsequently saw the specimen, and observed that my informant's description was correct in that it appeared a hybrid. Latterly, visiting the National Museum, I saw similar birds.—ISAAC BATEY. Drouin. [Mr. Batey's interesting remarks were read at the June meeting of the B.O.C.—EDS.]

AN AUTUMN OUTING.—Mr. H. C. Thompson and myself had an interesting afternoon among the birds in the neighbourhood of Launceston recently. Taking our way through the grand columnar rocks of Cataract Gorge, we turned at right angles and entered a wooded gully, down the centre of which is the course of a stream. Owing to the continued dry weather this autumn, the lower part of this course is now quite dry, but the tree-ferns shooting up from its rocky bed do not yet appear to have felt the effect of this unusual drought, but wave their fronds as luxuriantly as before. From the end of the Gorge, just before turning into the track alongside the watercourse, a fine Shrike-Thrush (*Collyriocinclla rectirostris*) flew from almost under our feet and retreated into a patch of scrub; we notice that this bird, in the comparatively open bush around our town, appears smaller and much lighter in tint than the same species which lives amid the great timbered tracts of the north-west of our island. Having entered the gully, a party of three Grey-tailed Thickheads (*Pachycephala glaucura*) entertained us with their tuneful whistling among the young gums just across the creek-bed; their throats were whitish, but we could not see any development of the rich yellow hue which adorns the breast of the matured male. A Fire-tailed Finch (*Zonæginthus bellus*) flew along before us, and soon after we espied a beautiful Strong-billed Honey-eater (*Melithreptus validirostris*) sitting on the topmost peak of a small dead tree, enjoying himself in the genial sunshine. This species is much more familiar than its congener, the Black-headed Honey-eater (*M. melanocephalus*), and I have often seen it come about the gardens of the North-West Coast in winter time to feed on the nectar of the crested wattle, that very early-flowering acacia which has come to us from Westralia. Amid a patch of bracken the Browntails (*Acanthiza diemenensis*) were uttering their sweet wild notes, and one which appeared amid the heads of the fern was a very well developed specimen, seemingly larger and darker in tint than the rest. Finding at length a good pool of clear water in the upper part of the rocky creek bed, we camped for lunch, and having boiled the billy and infused the Bohea, we fell to with good appetites, as it was then after two o'clock. Mr. Thompson had selected a delightful spot, sheltered from sun and wind and overhung with small blackwoods and wattles (acacias). Here the notes of the "Ground Diamond" frequently reached our ears—not the familiar "ding-dong" utterance of spring, but a sequence of three rapid notes, usually answered by a peculiar "purring" sound, perhaps uttered by the female. The beautiful mellow calls of the Yellow-throated Honey-eater (*Ptilotis flavigularis*) were also heard now and again, and seemed to fit in perfectly with our surroundings; somehow I always think of the Bulbul, as sung by the poets of the Orient, when enjoy-

ing the musical utterances of this fine Honey-eater. During our ramble between lunch and sundown many interesting nests were inspected, although, of course, tenantless at this season; for instance, that of a Grey-tailed Thickhead about 15 feet up in a prickly box, built of strips of peppermint bark, and lined very neatly with fine native grasses. My companion has found that the "Derwent Jackass" (*Cracticus cinereus*) always employs the shining seed-stalks of a native grass for lining purposes. The flask-like nests of Firetails were often under observation, usually in a prickly shrub or a small bushy-topped wattle, about 5 feet up, and constructed of coarse grass. While travelling through the Buchan district of Victoria in company with a friend, during the past summer, we discovered a nest of this species in February with three fresh eggs—very late house-keeping this! When building, this bird uses a lot of green grass. In a dogwood (*Pomaderris*), where a convenient cavity had been left among a lot of shoots at a height of about 6 feet 6 inches from the ground, was placed the home of a Shrike-Thrush, formed of strips of dry cassinia bark, and lined with fine grass and rootlets. Another was placed about 4 feet up in the midst of a green cassinia bush—a fine, big, circular nest, which measured $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter taken right across the top, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches inside diameter, and 3 inches deep. The method of construction was most ingenious: on the outside strips of peppermint gum bark were wound round and round; inside this was a layer of bark passed under the bottom of the nest instead of being wound round it, the ends coming vertically up the sides, and with this were gum leaves, also placed vertically; then another wall of horizontal bark-strips and leaves, the latter being also placed lengthwise to correspond with the bark. Where the ends or sides of leaves had projected above the top of the wall, the sharp beak of the Thrush had clipped off the offending portions as neatly as if done with scissors. The usual inner lining was employed, and a beautifully warm and secure home was the result of the indefatigable labours of these clever architects. High up in a white gum which grew in the gully was placed the nest of the Brown Hawk (*Hieracidea orientalis*) on a limb partly dead; two other of these bulky stick structures were espied near the top of a giant gum of the same species, probably 150 feet up, and placed on branches which were very conspicuous. These two would probably be built in different seasons by the same birds, as it is improbable that two pairs could exist in such close proximity. One of our most interesting inspections was that of a Dusky Robin's (*Petræca vittata*) home, built in a very unusual spot. This plain-plumaged little bird usually selects a niche in a hollow tree, or a site amid the roots which project from the butt of an overturned giant; but in this case it had chosen the horizontal limb of a dogwood tree

about 10 feet from the ground, and had placed the structure amid thick foliage, so as to be practically invisible. Mounting on to my friend's broad shoulders, I was enabled to make a close inspection, and found the principal material to be, as usual, fine rootlets, the top edge of twigs bound with cobweb; the lining was of grass, rootlets, and fine bark.—H. STUART DOVE. Launceston, 19/5/07.

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SOME BIRDS OCCURRING IN AREAS 8 AND 9 OF AUSTRALIA, NOT GIVEN IN HALL'S "KEY" (SECOND EDITION).—Some time since I received a copy of Mr. R. Hall's second edition of "Key to the Birds of Australia." The idea of giving the meanings and derivations of the various species and genera is an excellent one, interesting and instructive, but it was unfortunate, when Mr. Hall was bringing out a new edition, he did not give more attention to the distribution of species. Of course there can be no hard and fast boundary lines of any of the areas into which Australia is ornithologically divided on paper for convenience, but still the following list of species (to which I called Mr. Hall's attention soon after the publication of the first edition of his "Key") shows that the working out of the distribution of them has been very imperfectly done, at any rate for areas 8 and 9, and the list may prove of interest and use to other ornithologists. I know that Mr. Hall considers that the North-West Cape region should be included in area 9, but I maintain that it ornithologically forms part of area 8. For one reason, out of the enclosed list of 56 species 42 of them rarely occur as far south as Geraldton, leaving only 14 that appear to occur generally through S.W. Australia. Mr. Hall seems to be rather confused in his descriptions of the various *Pachycephala*—e.g., he describes *Pachycephala gilberti* as possessing a "black pectoral collar." This bird is not uncommon about Katanning and Broome Hill, but apparently Mr. Hall did not procure any specimens when he was in this vicinity in 1899.

List of birds observed and identified by me which are not marked in Mr. Hall's "Key" as occurring in area 9. Those marked with an asterisk are not marked in Mr. Hall's "Key" as occurring in either area 8 or 9:—

	Observed
4. <i>Haliastur girrenera</i>	.. Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
26. <i>Accipiter cirrhocephalus</i>	.. Albany to N.W. Cape
44. <i>Corvus coronoides</i> Albany to N.W. Cape
84. <i>Lalage tricolor</i> Albany to N.W. Cape
122. <i>Malurus leucopterus</i>	.. N.W. Cape region
175. <i>Stipiturus ruficeps</i>	.. N.W. Cape
*195. <i>Acanthiza uropygialis</i>	.. N.W. Cape
229. <i>Pomatorhinus rubeculus</i>	.. Minilya River
230. <i>Cinclorhamphus cruralis</i>	.. Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
*242. <i>Sphenostoma cristatum</i>	.. Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
248. <i>Cracticus nigrigularis</i>	.. Mingenew to N.W. Cape

Observed

*264.	<i>Pachycephala melanura</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*305.	<i>Zosterops lutea</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*347.	<i>Ptilotis leilavalensis (carteri?)</i>		Mingenew to N.W. Cape
345.	<i>Ptilotis keartlandi</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*381.	<i>Pardalotus rubricatus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*388.	<i>Petrochelidon nigricans</i>	..	Albany, Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
404.	<i>Emblema picta</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*430.	<i>Micropus pacificus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
437.	<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	..	Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
449.	<i>Dacelo cervina</i>	..	Gascoyne, Lyons, and Minilya Rivers
*453.	<i>Halcyon sordidus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
488.	<i>Cacatua gymnopsis</i>	..	Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
492.	<i>Calopsittacus novæ-hollandiæ</i>	..	Geraldton to N.W. Cape
*547.	<i>Geopelia tranquilla</i>	..	Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
552.	<i>Histriophaps histrionica</i>	..	Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
560.	<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	..	Gascoyne River to N.W. Cape
*562.	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	..	N.W. Cape
574.	<i>Turnix velox</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*596.	<i>Orthorhamphus magnirostris</i>	..	N.W. Cape
598.	<i>Glareola orientalis</i>	..	N.W. Cape
603.	<i>Erythronys cinctus</i>	..	Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
*607.	<i>Squatarola helvetica</i>	..	Albany and N.W. Cape
*608.	<i>Charadrius dominicus</i>	..	Albany and N.W. Cape
*609.	<i>Ochthodromus bicinctus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
610.	<i>Ochthodromus geoffroyi</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*611.	<i>Ochthodromus mongolus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*612.	<i>Ochthodromus veredus</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*628.	<i>Heteractitis brevipes</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*640.	<i>Calidris arenaria</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*643.	<i>Gelochelidon anglica</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*644.	<i>Hydropogone caspia</i>	..	Albany to N.W. Cape
*646.	<i>Sterna media</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*648.	<i>Sterna frontalis</i>	..	N.W. Cape
703.	<i>Geronticus spinicollis</i>	..	Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
705.	<i>Platalea regia</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*716.	<i>Demigretta sacra</i>	..	N.W. Cape
717.	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	..	Swan River to N.W. Cape
*718.	<i>Butorides stagnatilis</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*729.	<i>Plotus novæ-hollandiæ</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*735.	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	..	N.W. Cape
*736.	<i>Phaeton rubricauda</i>	..	N.W. Cape.
739.	<i>Podiceps novæ-hollandiæ</i>	..	Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
745.	<i>Anser semipalmata</i>	..	Broome Hill to N.W. Cape
*755.	<i>Nettion gibberifrons</i>	..	N.W. Cape
125A.	<i>Malurus assimilis</i>	..	N.W. Cape

I may also remark that in *The Ibis* for 1902 Mr. Hall records as collected by himself in S.W. Australia the following species:—*Lalage tricolor*, *Malurus lamberti*, *Sphenostoma cristatum*, *Ptilotis leilavalensis*, *Petrochelidon nigricans*, *Hydropogone caspia*, and *Accipiter cirrhocephalus*, but does not include them in area 9. Also, in his "Key," No. 18A, *Cerchneis unicolor* (Milligan) is

marked as occurring in area 8, and 240A, *Xerophila castaneiventris* as occurring in area 9. The former (*C. unicolor*) was obtained at Yalgoo, east of Geraldton, and the latter (*X. castaneiventris*) was obtained at Day Dawn, which is N.E. of Yalgoo!—TOM CARTER. Broome Hill (W.A.), 24/6/07.

Forgotten Feathers.

“GALDENS,” *alias* “GAULDINGS.”

BY TOM CARTER, BROOME HILL, W.A.

REFERRING to previous correspondence respecting Dampier's “Galdens” (*Emu*, vol. vi., pages 152, 207), the following descriptive account of the “*Gaulding*,” which is given below word for word as printed in an old volume now in my possession, will, I think, be of interest to many ornithologists, and also prove that it is by no means certain that by “Galden” Dampier meant the Little Mangrove-Bittern (*Butorides stagnatilis*).

I have had the volume in question for some time, but only noticed the reference to *Gaulding* this week, when I had taken up the work to improve an idle evening. The book was published on 1st January, 1808, by H. D. Symonds, and contains a short life of George Louis le Clerc, Count of Buffon, by Condorcet, and also parts of Buffon's “Natural History.” But, unfortunately, though the book is a bulky one, and has many coloured plates, it is incomplete, and does not contain a plate of the bird in question, the only birds figured being the “Avocetta” and “Crown-Bird.” Buffon's description of the “Large White Gaulding” might well be for the Large White Egret, but what species of *Herodiones* his “Blue Gaulding” referred to gives room for much theory, as the birds he described are apparently taken haphazard from all parts of the world, and are without classification. The “Gaulding” comes between the “Curasow” and “Otis,” and a few pages further on are accounts of the “Red-legged Horseman,” the “Pokkoe,” the “Umbre,” the “Kokoi,” &c.

The “Sheathbill” and “Fan-tailed Flycatcher” are briefly mentioned as hailing from New Zealand. The birds mentioned as being so numerous in Greenland were probably one of the *Alcidæ*, possibly *Alca impennis*, and do not appear to have much bearing on the “Gaulding.”

EXTRACT FROM BUFFON'S “NATURAL HISTORY.”

THE GAULDING.

There are several varieties of this species, the most remarkable of which is the *Large White Gaulding*, which measures from the end of the bill to that of the tail about three feet and a half, and about four feet from the extension of each wing; the bill is very long, angular, and of a yellow colour, in which there are two long slits for nostrils. The neck is very crooked, resembling in some degree a Roman S, and is about eleven inches